



Public Service Commission of Wisconsin

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Commission Approves Weston Unit 4 Uses New Streamlined Process

MADISON – Today, the Public Service Commission granted a Certificate of Public Convenience and Necessity on the application proposed by Wisconsin Public Service Corporation (WPS) to construct a new coal-fired electric generating facility called Weston Unit 4 to meet energy demand and ensure reliability for customers in the WPS service area.

Chairperson Burnie Bridge says, “The Environmental Impact Statement and the record in this case prove quite convincingly the need for a new baseload power plant in Wisconsin. Our other baseload plants are aging and we continue to see a strain on our transmission system. Weston 4 will meet the energy demands needed currently and anticipated in our state.”

Commission Bert Garvin agreed stating, “Our decision today confirms that there is a clear need for a greater baseload capacity in our state and Weston 4 will meet that need.”

“Future energy production is an integral part of growing Wisconsin’s economy. The testimony in this case clearly demonstrates the need for the Weston 4 power plant,” says Commissioner Mark Meyer.

This is the first construction project reviewed under the new streamlined regulatory system established under 2003 Wis. Act 89. Under the new law, the Department of Natural Resources (DNR) permitting process works hand-in-hand with the PSC’s review process on power plant and transmission construction projects while maintaining the same high standards. Now, both agencies conduct their reviews concurrently rather than sequentially, cutting the time for review nearly in half.

“Coordinating the DNR and PSC review procedures really paid off in improved communication and interaction, keeping the project on track and progressing and providing some predictability to the timeline in these major construction cases,” Bridge said.

Under the new streamlined regulatory process, the PSC process is complete and it is expected all the DNR permits will be in place only seven months after the WPS application to construct Weston 4 was determined complete.

The new supercritical pulverized coal (SCPC) electric generating unit will have a generating capacity of approximately 515 megawatts and will be located near the existing Weston Generating Station, south of Wausau in Marathon County. (One megawatt of electricity is sufficient energy to power 500 residences.)

SCPC technology burns pulverized coal to heat water to a temperature and pressure that exceeds its critical point in order to produce steam. The steam powers the turbines, which in turn run the generators that produce energy. The SCPC technology is more efficient and creates fewer air emissions than technologies being used at existing coal-fired power plants in Wisconsin.

The estimated cost to construct the proposed project is approximately \$752 million. WPS plans to begin operating the Weston Unit 4 in June 2008.

Technical hearings regarding the application were held August 3-5, 2004, at the Public Service Commission in Madison. In addition, public hearings were held August 10th in Mosinee. The testimony provided at the hearings became part of the record developed for the Commission to review as it considered all the aspects of the application.

PSC staff is expected to complete the written order of the Commission's finalized decisions yet this fall.

The documents associated with this case can be viewed on our Electronic Repository System at <http://psc.wi.gov/>. Click on ERF System, select Search Electronic Repository System and enter docket #6690-CE-187.

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